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TO MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

The public impression made by this Association has not revealed its fundamental purpose. The Association has been characterized as a sort of labor union seeking to protect itself from the tyranny of its employers; also as a self-appointed judicial body trying cases which do not concern it. Such characterizations have arisen in consequence of certain of our activities, which belong to the category of what the public press regards as 'news.' From the point of view of a biologist, it may be said that although self-protection is a function of every organism, it is only incidental to the fundamental purpose of the organism, which is to develop maximum strength and efficiency.

In the same way, this Association has its incidental function of self-protection, when such protection is necessary, but its chief function is to develop through co-operation a maximum efficiency in teaching and in investigation. One of the most impressive lessons of these days is that when a nation wishes to develop its greatest efficiency, all of its citizens must join hands and work together, competition giving place to co-operation. This Association is facing the same problem, and its chief purpose is to stimulate teaching and investigation by bringing into one organic whole the great body of American professors, that each may feel the influence of all. It is this positive, constructive aspect of our work that appeals most strongly. Academic freedom and academic tenure are important, but academic efficiency is our excuse for existence.

The important services rendered by American professors in connection with the war, supplemented by this Association in increasing efficiency, will bring a recognition of the fact that this great teaching and investigating organization is our most valuable national asset.

J. M. COULTER.